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INCARNATION: AN ESSAY IN THREE PARTS

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I. A MODERN SUPERSTITION

What is superstition? What is it in general? An answer to this question, however brief, seems to be an appropriate, if not even a necessary, introduction to this first part of the present essay.

Some superstition, I venture to say, always attaches to human life, although in many instances it may not be obtrusive. Not only are men somehow given to it by nature, but also life gets from it a quality which life can ill afford to lose. It is a fault, of course, but some faults are at least half-lovable. In form, not in substance, not in respect to its real place in life, superstition is very like religion. Indeed, according to some, even in substance the two show very little if any difference. Certainly both show men accepting as real something for which there is no positive evidence or at least no sufficient positive evidence. So, for example, have both ghosts and gods, strange visions and great ideals, been real in the life and experience of men. As to any difference between the two I suggest that, whatever else may have to be said of it, superstition makes life picturesque, at times almost beautiful, while religion—by which I mean something bigger and more vital than either theology or ecclesiasticism—makes life sublime. Superstition, again, prompts only an active life; religion, a productive life. Men move, sometimes very busily, under the former; under the latter they achieve and progress, entering into a new life instead of just moving about in the old life. This suggests, I think correctly, that religion belongs at the very battle-front of life, where adventure and discovery and creative achievement are the issue; that superstition, if related to religion, names rather what at any time in a people's religion is outgrown than what is immediately interesting and vital; in a word, that superstition is traditional and

even formal, perhaps with a touch of conservatism, or the obstinacy of habit, while true religion, being boldly superior to all positive evidence, actual or possible at the time, is not traditional, but creatively present, living, even—thanks to its great faith—future. Is not the present reality even of the unseen future the real motive of religion? Of course religion seems to depend on objects of superstition for its emotional expression and cultivation, just as new life generally must find its mediation, the medium of its expression, in old forms, but I would here insist that religion itself, vital religion, is, in its own distinctive character, one of the pioneer forces of life. If life is ever vitally religious, it is already alive with the future.

Whether such be the difference between superstition and religion or not, one fact about superstition lends support to it. Thus there always clings about the word “superstition,” perhaps as a part of the at least half-lovable picturesqueness, a certain suggestion of offense. A “superstitious” man is lazy, inert, idly proud. He takes for real not merely, with his fathers before him, something for which there is insufficient evidence or even no evidence at all, but also something against which evidence, available to him, out of reach of his fathers, has been discovered. To ignore existing and available evidence against something is surely very different from that splendid adventure of men, the adventure of true religion, wherein for larger life, for new life, men hopefully press forward beyond what, with their best powers of vision, they are able to see. The adventure of religion is honest, squarely facing and boldly trusting a real mystery, but superstition—I would say this only very gently—is dishonest. Superstition, then, may have the form, but it does not have the substance of religion. It may even supply religion with the medium of expression, but in itself it is not religion.

In the sense, then, of superstition, as I have now represented it—let me hope not unfairly—in the sense of superstition as not the courage of the invisible but the obstinate blindness to the visible, I wish here to call attention to a certain modern superstition. I wish to call attention to the modern superstition of a morally external, distant, natural world, and, doing this, I would make a plea, in what I believe to be the interests of greater spirituality in

life, for a closer intimacy of man with the world immediately around him, of spiritual life with natural life. Indeed the three short parts of this essay: "A Modern Superstition," "What Ideals Are Made Of," and "Some Practical Values of Mystery," are all designed to give emphasis to this plea. Also as a single title for all three I have chosen a word on whose historical associations and wealth of meaning I do not need to dwell: "Incarnation." Has not the life of the spirit been long in need of more, ever more, of the substance of nature?

The superstition of an external natural world? I mean the superstition of men holding themselves aloof from nature, of regarding nature as at best an unavoidable evil, an unpleasant or dangerously pleasant compulsion, an unsympathetic necessity imposed upon their moral and spiritual life from without. But, objects someone at once, in these days there is no such superstition. Evolution has quite dispelled it. A pharisaical "holier-than-thou" aloofness, the degenerate survivor of the mediaeval cloister, there may still be some among us. But no longer do men seriously think that man and nature are in any respect exclusive of each other. I am not, however, speaking of what men just think. Theoretically, thanks to science and evolution, man and nature are become one, man in loyalty to his origin belonging, body and soul, quite within the life and unity of nature. Apart from theory, too, thanks now to poets and essayists, many of them in their own visionary way even outstripping the discoveries of science, there is a great deal of nice sentiment about nature and her humanity, her messages to the human heart, her spiritual values. Still, in spite of theory and in spite of art and sentiment, practically nature is kept at too great a distance. In fear and misunderstanding, now a needless misunderstanding, we still hold ourselves aloof. Her life or force is not our will. Her character—material, physical, only "natural"—is not our character—immaterial, spiritual, in some sense even supernatural. Her law, while indeed we know we may not escape it, while it is even self-executing, is not our conscience. And all this, because in our modern superstition we defy existing evidence and for our practical living still treat her as something foreign; as something, if in any

way in our lives, to be outgrown; something primitive perhaps, as when we speak of the primitive passions, but primitive, or primary, only in time, not in value.

In our aloofness are we possibly making too much of visible distances? Truly nature's various objects, her rocks and her trees, her seas and her islands or continents, are at distances, often at very great distances, from us, that is, from our bodies, and at least in the past there has been great enchantment in distance. Far things were strange things, adventurously sought, fearsomely shunned. In them dwelt the magical and occult, working good, working evil. But nowadays how insufficient is distance as evidence of an external and mysterious nature! Have we not learned to measure and appraise even the distance of the stars? Distance measured and appraised may still keep the far things external to our bodies, but even makes them internal to our lives. Doubtless in the Middle Ages before the centuries of measurement and appraisal there was ample cause, even good strategy, in the cautious aloofness from nature. The cloister did mankind a very large service. Nature was then a mystery waiting to be explored and conquered. But now we are not living, or at least need not live, in the Middle Ages. Why, then, should we betray our own later time and its heritage, its splendid heritage? Why should we betray what even the mediaeval religion, thanks to its great faith and to its courage in overcoming an external mysterious nature, did for us? Why, following its example, showing not a lazy cowardice in a blindness we can help, but confidence and boldness in a blindness we cannot help, do we not ourselves press on to the battle-front of our own day? Why still fight the already won battle?

A little church history and a very little theology may not be amiss at this point. The Western or Roman church of the Middle Ages, as too few appreciate, did indeed, for reasons not less strategical than theological, hold to the aloofness of the spiritual from the physical, of the ideally human from the natural, but who can read history fairly and fail to see that from the beginning it was actively and courageously concerned with conquest of the physical, with assimilation of the natural to the spiritual? What else but this

can be the meaning of its early interest in temporal power and of its separation from the more intellectualistic and abstractly spiritual Eastern church? How else can we give full significance to the insistence—as result of the controversies of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries—on the Son, symbol of the spiritual in the natural, being possessed of the Holy Ghost equally¹ with the Father? What stronger reason can Charlemagne, at once favorite son of the Roman church and ambitious champion of the Holy Roman Empire, have had for preferring the Western to the Eastern church? How can we account for the candor of the image-worship? for the Mariolatry? the adoration of saints? the patronage of fine arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, music? the schools and the ever more and more independent thinking? How explain what with shallowest appreciation, or rather with intent of abuse than of appreciation, men have so often called the idolatry and materialism? True, the material and sensuous too often got the better of the church and its followers, high and low, and protest had to be made; but, when all is said, the very idolatry and materialism were in a positive sense what made Protestantism possible. Was Protestantism more than a splendid fruitage or—lest this suggest finality—a fruitful continuation of that Roman Catholic “materialism” by which—this being the true motive of Protestantism—the natural was held to be “of one substance” with the spiritual?

Protestantism surely has done much, not merely as a matter of faith and dogma, but as a matter of actual life, to realize the equality of the human and natural with the spiritual. Protestantism, I say, has done much, translating the symbolism of the mediaeval creed, as prophetic as it was dogmatic, into the practical relations of human life; but in my present plea for a greater intimacy of the spiritual with the natural I am simply suggesting that the Protestant motive, really only continuing Catholicism, has not yet gone far enough, that the time has come for a new and forward Protestantism, perhaps a neo-Protestantism, under which man will find himself even more fully and freely, more

¹ The particular creed reads: “And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son.” And again: “And in the Lord Jesus Christ . . . being of one substance with the Father.”

spiritually, in nature. There can, I think, be little doubt that Protestantism's rather obstinate misunderstanding of the Romanist's materialism, a misunderstanding of course for which Rome herself has been to blame in no small measure, has acted as a check upon advance. So to speak, the Christian church has seemed determined not again to be burned by the material and sensuous. Now, however, with their clearer vision Protestants must at once show more candor and more appreciation toward Romanism and, fulfilling the prophecy of Catholic dogma, move forward by effecting a still greater intimacy with nature. Let me say, however repetitiously, that Christendom's conquest of nature, the first battles being successfully fought by Rome and the strife being then taken up by Wittenberg, has at last been such as to make possible both, first, cordial recognition of Rome's great work in expressing and partially realizing the incarnation and, secondly, another advance in the process of its realization, Christendom being now ready to outdo even Luther in equation of the spiritual with the natural. Truly the second head of the Trinity has been a splendid symbol, and as a dogma it has been a great force. Splendid it still is. It stood and it still stands boldly for an idea, seen afar, a religious faith; not for anything less. But today the prophecy of it is being fulfilled, or may be fulfilled, as never before. Today we have more than the symbol or than the Christian's faith in it; we have also, at least as possible, the actual life. And the fulfilment, the realization in actual life, can come only with the passing of the superstitious aloofness still surviving in man's attitude toward nature.

Forgetting Romanism and Protestantism and "consubstantiality,"² whether in religious symbol or in actual living, and returning to the evidence, what in the light of the now available evidence is the natural world from which man must no longer hold himself aloof? Would that I knew how best to answer this question. I do know beforehand that I shall not succeed very well in my attempt at an answer to it. For the task a poet were better fitted than a philosopher. Already I have referred to the natural world

² Referring, of course, to the Son, or the human and natural being, "of one substance" with the Father, the spiritual.

with its rocks and trees, suns and stars, as at the present time a world of measured and appraised distances and, adding that the distances, the spatial properties and relations, of molecules and atoms have also been measured and appraised, I would say, what I said before, that such a measured world, however external to our bodies, cannot be external to our living. Still, pertinent and suggestive as so much is, much more needs to be said, and I shall speak of three now manifest attributes of the natural world which seem to me to be of special significance: (1) its essential justice; (2) its deep, warm intimacy with human life; and (3) its great mediation.

As to the first of these attributes, the justice, there is the fact, not less humanly historical than biologically evolutionary, that in character or quality environment, only another name for the "external natural world," has not been a fixed thing, arbitrary and independent, but has changed relatively and pertinently with the progress of living creatures. The two developments, that of environment and that of the creatures, have not been two independent developments at all, but, quite to the contrary, have been two mutually supporting phases of one process. In human history the recognized character of the natural world has been whatever it has been at any time, only coincidently with a certain human attainment at that time. We have, for example, or till recently have had, to reckon with, a physical, mechanical, external natural world. In the near future, if not today, thanks especially to biology and chemistry, that world certainly must be seen, not as a merely mechanical world, but—only I am at a loss for the right word—as supermechanical. In our centuries of mechanicalism man has constantly shown himself a mechanical genius, skilfully devising and using with startling results wonderful machines, so that he would be a strange creature indeed, if, while himself such a successful mechanic, he claimed that the mechanical, natural world was external to his life. The very food he eats would then have to be said to be external too! And before the centuries of mechanicalism there was a different world and a different human genius. Erratic, given to extremes, dependent on chance or miracle, temperamental, man met a world quite in kind, a world

of strange adventure and romance, alive with spirits and powers of all sorts. So we may conclude, man's history being one of continuous conflict with nature, that the external world has maintained a most admirable sportsmanship. It has not taken unfair advantage. It has confronted man, so to speak, in like size and kind. As thus in history, so also in personal life we may see an essential justice. The child's world is, and so properly is, very different from the man's. Can we, then, with good grace think of nature as external to us? The creatures of one life, twin-born and, if I may so put it, twin-growing, man and his natural world may never be put asunder.

The intimacy of nature as expressed in the "external" world may be a subtle intimacy, a reserved, to ordinary hearing inarticulate, familiarity; but, subtle and quiet though it be, it is very real; a very real intimacy or familiarity with all things human. The natural world is man's whole past as a memory outwardly recorded in all the various forms of nature and in their arrangement and sequence. To meet nature with any appreciation is to find in her a veritable Mnemosyne, although one may never have believed in this daughter of Heaven and Earth before. Can anyone be more intimate than the goddess of memory? Any book we may read, passing from word to word, from line to line, from page to page, especially if the reading be, as we may say, to ourselves, if it be not aloud and also be controlled in other ways, the rapidly following suggestions and values of all the printed symbols and their relations being taken only for their meaning in consciousness, not for expression in outward acts, is also a dwelling-place, indeed one of the favorite groves, of this goddess, and so, thanks to her presence, is intimate with us, however quietly. But, still more subtly and far more comprehensively than any printed book, nature as manifested to us in all her visible forms holds the meanings and memories of our long human past and the deep familiarity of them. Sedately the mature man walks along the street and passes the trees, the climbable trees, and the stones, the throwable stones, and, quietly unconscious of the boy in him that once climbed the one and threw the other, thus prosaically accepts the world around him, unmoved, reading it quite to himself; but surely the values which things

once had for him and the activities of which he now controls so well have much to do with the easy, comfortable familiarity that he feels as he moves along and, if the goddess does not occasionally appear to him, he is a sedate person indeed. Only, the controlled climbing and throwing tell but a very small part of the story. No street surely is made only of trees a boy once climbed or stones a boy once threw and very much as the mature man walks the street, holding himself aloof, or rather under control, so generally men follow the ways of the whole world. In truth that world can be at least no more external to man than his memories, which, however subtly, must be present in all the meanings and values, values of form and structure as well as values of color or of any sense quality, which the world holds.

Besides the justice of nature and the intimacy of nature, in order that still further I may dispel the superstition of an external natural world, I have, thirdly, to speak of the mediation, which also may be called the liberative power, of nature. So many see bondage and necessity in the natural world about them, whereas the real meaning of it is mediation and consequent liberation. To have a familiar street to walk in, a world to follow all the intimate paths of, is the very essence of freedom. Can anyone possibly exaggerate the value, for purposes of free living, of a world, the *milieu* of one's life, whose very substance, as I venture to say, is memory supplemented by self-control? But here let me be—perhaps only seem—a bit fantastic. I can imagine men feeling grateful to the earth-clods and stones, to the plants, and to the animals of the world for maintaining their lower ways of being or living that men themselves, these lower ways being now past in the sense of being under control, may have the leisure or freedom of a higher life. As to the life of men being higher, it is so just in the sense of the lower having, like all memories, ceased to be of immediate value and become only mediate. Free men, I submit, if the freedom have any substance, are still even of the earth earthy, but in their lives the ways of the clod and the plant and the beast have been put under foot and so have been made mediate. So, looking out upon the natural world, seeing its dead but materially useful clods, its stupidly growing but life-supporting plants, and its only

sensuously free but productively living as well as often, in meaning well beyond one's first understanding, domestic animals, he must indeed even gratefully exclaim: Behold the world of my life's mediation; the world of my liberation! Similarly a leisured and upper class in the narrower human society might feel toward the environing lower classes which by their various labors maintain the more commonplace activities which the leisured class has put aside. What the lower do the higher are thus saved from doing—except mediately—and the principle manifested here and also generally in the mediation and liberation of the natural environment is certainly a principle not less of moral than of economic significance. In the social environment and in the natural environment there is maintained vicariously the life from which men have come to stand aloof, which they have got under control, which has become only subordinate or mediate to their real interest. Instead, then, of speaking merely of the mediation and liberative power of nature, we might even speak of her redemptive power. The external natural world saves us by taking upon itself the life of our past, the life of our self-control. Wherefore in our external world there dwells, just because it is "external," more than the goddess of memory; there dwells also a spirit that is ever setting us free; so that, once more, although that world is at a distance, external to our bodies, it cannot be said, without superstition, to be external to our lives. Also, now with greatly enhanced meaning, to be able to view it as not external, to feel its justice, its intimacy and its liberation, is to understand the Incarnation, dogma, historical fulfilment, Catholic materialism, Protestantism and all, as never before. The Catholic dogma was indeed a great prophecy.

I must conclude this first part of my essay quite abruptly. What does such an evident intimacy, that must almost be called a personal intimacy, of nature with man lead to? It is, I think, very little to say that materialism is quite robbed of its sting. Nature is essentially spiritual. But quite properly the call is for something more immediately practical than this. What does nature's even personal intimacy mean in practical life? In the two parts of this essay which are to follow: "What Ideals Are Made Of" and "Some Practical Values of Mystery," I shall try to answer this question at

some length, but I remark one thing now. As never before, with a new candor, even with a religious conviction, men must equate conscience with the laws of nature, duty and all spiritual opportunity with natural necessity. Of course for some time feebly, sporadically, in personal and domestic affairs and in affairs of social life men have shown a disposition, leading to many acts on their part, to find their duty in what the present knowledge of nature and her laws has revealed. The great movements in preventive medicine will illustrate what I mean. The growing dependence of legislation on commissions, statistics, laboratories, will afford further illustration. But surely the equation of conscience with natural law has at best been lagging and grudging, and our new Protestantism, that would bring man close to nature, demands real as well as confident equation. Too long have we misunderstood nature and her necessity. No longer may we imagine or need we imagine that the natural, "material" world can be rendered unreal or at least innocuous by a pious aloofness or exorcised by any spoken or written words. No longer may we suppose even that in exceptional situations the laws of nature, which can stand only for the law and order of the street by which, if we be self-controlled, we walk, of the way by which we advance to better things, will not operate or ought not to operate.

II. WHAT IDEALS ARE MADE OF

In the first part of this Gallic essay I have spoken of the modern superstition of a spiritually or morally external natural world. It is, as I have said, superstitious to persist today in a mediaeval aloofness of man's spiritual life from the natural world, now that, thanks even to the conquests of nature undertaken by mediaeval institutions, the real conditions of life and consciousness afford available evidence against the spiritual and the natural being necessarily opposed. Not only is the life of the spirit greatly in need of more of the substance of nature, but also, as I have tried to show, nature may now be regarded as herself essentially or immanently spiritual and fully capable of expressing or mediating the spiritual life. Thus, her distances being now accurately measured and appraised, although external to our bodies, she can no longer

be external to our lives. Also, even more significantly, as manifested in the so-called external world, she has been seen to be possessed of the quality of justice, of a deep though quiet intimacy, the intimacy which memories, kept real and outwardly present, must always impart, and of a liberative or redemptive power. And, finally, as I have suggested, turning to the practical meaning of a world so intimate and so helpful, conscience must be candidly and confidently equated with natural law. When all is said, can natural law, as now so intelligible to men, possibly stand for anything but the orderly arrangement of the familiar street, the way, in which at last they have acquired the power, the self-control, of walking erect and of walking, if not yet altogether easily and freely, at least sedately? It has taken men centuries to acquire this power and the well-ordered way of a manifestly lawful world for its expression. Why, then, should they not enjoy the opportunity so afforded? Why timorously stand aloof? Why not enter confidently upon the great adventure of realizing the spiritual in the natural?

But all this, says someone, is to rob life of its long-cherished idealism. Henceforth may we no longer look above and beyond for our ideals? Must we now taint them, compromise them, with what is here and present? How can they be made of anything so real as the natural world and the life of the natural world we find immediately around us? To these questions I reply that certainly no robbery has been intended. In intention, instead of being robbed of its long-cherished idealism, life is to be freed from a no longer productive and vitally satisfying expression of its old and never-old idealism. Of course there are ease and complacency in setting one's ideals aloft and afar, where they may not be too immediately and insistently urgent upon one or in danger of any other kind of contact with one's world, but in point of fact, as the achievements of history bear witness, true idealism among men has never been so abstract and so lacking in heroism. An idealism for things near must indeed be more difficult than for things afar, demanding more faith, more vision, more real will, more heroism; but difficulty is hardly an objection. Indeed a conveniently far idealism, lazily and confidently even perfectionistic, is not a real

or dynamic idealism at all, but sentimentalism, conservatism, inaction clothing itself with a more or less diaphanous self-righteousness.

How unorthodox and unconventional I am! In spite of my appeal to history, how inaccurate historically! Do we not owe to the Christian vision, to which men were awakened centuries ago and which has been cherished by them down to the present day, the most commanding idealism, a far idealism, an other-world idealism, of all history? Waiving any better reason, I answer just for the sake of argument, if there is to be any argument, that we do. I insist also, however, that Christian idealism at its source and in terms of the life of the time was really, in spite of its "other world," supremely near and practical and heroic. It found the then present conditions of that Hebrew-Roman, Greek-Roman, and from so many other Mediterranean quarters hyphenated Roman life spiritually ideal. Thus, if in some sense it was far, other-world idealism, we have only to remember that the world was then a world of unmeasured distances, of far, unexplored regions; that the different peoples, their own civilizations passing, were naturally looking beyond and afar, perhaps across the seas to new shores, perhaps even behind the stars or under the earth, and that accordingly in its vision their idealism followed the imagery of a distant world. If, as thus an other-world idealism, it exalted self-denial and the unselfish brotherhood of men and an implicit faith in whatever might happen, we have only to remember that the passing nations and their civilizations were giving up what they had, losing their whole worlds; that universal empire, taking all men into its fold, was the active purpose as well as in striking degree the actual event; and that, might being ascendant, faith rather than reason or understanding was man's only resort. If, finally, the Jews were the people who proved able, although not without all the pangs of such birth, to produce the leader who in his personal life could express heroic self-denial, universal human brotherhood, and great faith, thus wonderfully idealizing the hard, very near facts of the time, we have only to remember that the very people, whose life was notably one of many captivities, was fitted by its own history and the deep experience of that history, so oft repeated, as no other

people, to "take captivity captive," if I may quote the Psalmist, or to teach to the variously hyphenated Mediterranean life the needed lesson of the hour, equating spiritual opportunity with the hardest kind of near, present, worldly necessity. Surely, then, understood by the life that gave it birth, Jewish or Mediterranean, Christianity must nowadays look to its ways and its attitudes, offensive and defensive, lest it fail any longer, as so truly and so heroically in its youth, to be vitally idealistic. As then, so now its ideal must be found in what is present and real.

But now, to recite what is become almost a refrain of this essay, the world's distances have been measured and appraised. There is left no westward trend of empire. No regions remain dark and unexplored, the homes of strange creatures and stranger happenings. Civilization no longer has the frontiers that for centuries have greatly influenced the valuations of the life at hand and inspired the human imagination of something beyond. Even the region beneath the earth or behind the stars is not the mysterious region it once was. So, if the real spirit of the old idealism is to continue to live among men, the letter must pass, or at least such terms as "beyond" and "above," as "the hereafter" and "the other world," every one of them, I doubt not, representing something that is essential to a living idealism, must be freed from their traditional imagery of distance and space generally. As to this liberation, I ought to add that what exploration, which has of course been more than geographical, being often very minute as well as very scientific in other fields, has done for the world in space, history and evolution have done for the world in time. The past, in other words, has been explored and even the future as the interval, short or long, following on the heels of the present, holds nothing but a continuation of what has been from the beginning. Wherefore for the new idealism the old time-imagery as well as the old space-imagery must give way to something new. How can either the far-off or the yet-to-come, the future, now that the regions of space and time have been so thoroughly opened to view, mean what they used to mean? But, the distances of space and time overcome or, as the newspapers sometimes boast, annihilated,

under what new imagery can idealism envisage its beyond or its hereafter?

This question is not easily answered, although the call for the new imagery is very clear. Certainly I may not here introduce any of the day's metaphysicians, asking them to tell of their new time and their new space. I might, I suppose, go so far as to suggest that today's beyond and hereafter must get their meaning in the fourth dimension, which the papers jest about and which, as the public has to assume, the mathematicians and philosophers discuss as wisely as seriously; but my present readers may not yet have accustomed themselves either to a fourth-dimensional vision and imagination or to a fourth-dimensional way of moving about, of passing from a present to some future position or condition. So I say, instead, that the new imagery must be imagery in intension in place of the old imagery in extension. Is this substituting the fire for the frying-pan? Then once more and very simply, today's idealism, if it would be vital, must emphasize quality, not quantity; it must, in other words, seek to make this world different, not to enter another; to live into a new life today and here, not tomorrow and yonder; to revalue what is, not—spurning what is—to seek something else. Putting my meaning, at last, as simply as I know how, I would say that the new idealism, instead of beginning at a distance in space and time, must begin, with a candor and a directness never realized before and doubtless never possible before, immediately at home. It must still be idealism, more idealistic than ever, but relatively to the old imagery an immediate idealism; for, the distances being now measured and appraised, this life, no other, is the ideal life and mutation of it, not translation to another—is just that to which men, who have good red blood, must apply their full strength and their whole faith. Henceforth difference, not distance, must separate the actual from the ideal.

If anyone now protest that again I have been unfair to traditional Christianity, implying, as I certainly have implied, that Christianity by its far ideal, by its other world, has exalted quantity above quality, another or second life above this life, I need only explain that most assuredly I have not meant to deny to Christianity an interest in quality, or character, but only, now that

the times are so ripe for the change, to ask that the interest be both quick and direct. That other world has indeed been different, *but also distant*, and this world as a way to the other has been valued primarily only for its quantities. Now, however, what matters how long one lives, how far one travels, how much one gets, whence in a far past one came, whither in a far future one is going? All that can now matter is what one is here, what one does now, what present value one's world has, and what difference one can find and realize in it. In short, Christianity under what has been called neo-Protestantism must, once more relatively to its traditional imagery, be direct, immediate, intensive in its idealism. Being this, moreover, it will really only continue loyal to its great past, proving itself adaptive to the changed conditions. Failing to be this, it will simply have to give way to its own original idealism under some new name.

The immediacy of the ideal, its presence in what is actual, its here-and-now character, on which I am insisting with so much iteration and which would make a near instead of a far idealism, an inward instead of an outward idealism, has had a certain recognition in a saying, often heard, rather subtle but very significant, that a man's vices are also his virtues and, contrariwise, that his virtues are also his vices. Years ago men might not, without very general shock and protest, say such a thing as that. Years ago rogues were rogues, thoroughly bad; saints were thoroughly good. But today one may neither totally damn nor totally elect anybody. Again, showing in a striking way how near materially and spatially the actual even at its worst and the ideal are, if being natural has in it all the dangers of offensive selfishness, brutality, and sensuality, also it holds, as is nowadays often represented, the supreme opportunity for whatever may make men spiritual. Risk there surely is in exhorting men to be natural, but at this time, according to a view getting more and more hold, there is nothing more ideal. In a word, which must show anew what Incarnation, the general title of this essay, is designed to mean, good and evil, however different, are no longer materially far apart; indeed, as specifically in the case of a man's vices being also his virtues, good and evil are made from one and the same materials. Could I state better the great prin-

ciple of a here-and-now idealism? of an idealism no longer treating the ideal world as another distant world? Consider, in additional evidence of the principle, how the very noblest adventure of life, even that of great martyrdom and low gambling are both ways of acting on chance. Sensuality and great moral victory and leadership both show distinct assertion of self. Weakness and strength both depend on power outside. Lawlessness is the way not less of the reformer than the transgressor. Sex is the source alike of what is best and what is worst in life. Money is by no means only the root of evil; great good also comes through it. Also, be any of these things, as so often happens, an object of hate, it is well to remember that in point of fact men can hate only what they might and even would love.

Yet subtleties like these, except for their being so true to the new spirit of the day, may only puzzle many who are following or trying to follow me. So, to present today's would-be or should-be here-and-now idealism in another way, the general history of human ideals tells really a great story. In the whole realm of possible human interest is there anything, low or high, that has not at some time been held ideal by somebody or by some group? that has not been worshiped? and even personified and deified? This historic plurality of human ideals, the polytheism—implied when not candid—of most if not all religions and the comprehensiveness by which in either case nothing in human nature, not even what is low and dangerous, has been overlooked afford emphatic indication of the nature and rôle of idealism. They show how imperialistic it is. They show, although the procedure has been very piecemeal and often has involved large not to say disastrous risks, as in the recognition and worship of gods of theft, intemperance, passion, and war, how determined human nature has been to control and spiritualize itself and its world at every point. They show how loyal to living human nature and to the natural world idealism has always been.

So, what are ideals made of? Ideals are made of real things. They are rooted, not in unreality, but in reality. The things about us, the powers within us, are all material for what is ideal. Ideals are not given to life from outside of life, but are in and of the life

itself, natural products of it, its own urgent motives to it. If they came from outside, as if strange visitors from Mars or rather from some more distant quarter not in the recognized universe at all, do but think a moment how meaningless they would be to any human being, how service of them could be only blind and aimless, dead in the language under which they might be adored and lifelessly formal and ritualistic in the deeds by which their realization might be supposed to be accomplished. Real success, too, in their realization could come only through absolute chance or a wholly miraculous intervention. Only with help from Mars could men of this earth in thought or in act follow a Martian. Only a power quite outside could ever raise man to the new life demanded and then, the raising accomplished, I cannot see how so great a lifting would be at all worth while. But, when ideals, instead of being strange visitors from outside, are natural, being born even as all things are born, of life itself, even as the Son of Man humbled himself to be born of woman, then instead of depending on blind ritual and dead language and outside intervention, their realization depends only on direct, well-controlled and enlightened action. Thus natural, nature-born ideals are ideals whose realization one can plan, as one plans any common action, and execute with the same interesting adventure and, if success come, the same satisfying success. If this seems to anyone to make the moral life too easy and too commonplace, I have only to say that any suggestion of ease that my words may have given is a most complete illusion. Naturalism is a more difficult idealism than supernaturalism of any sort has ever been.

Again, what are ideals made of? Mark the plural. A far idealism can set up one thing which men are seeking. The distance somehow lends a hospitable generality, as well as the usual enchantment, to the thing selected; but a here-and-now idealism may never be quite so single-minded. For it what is ideal must comprehend any recognized condition of life. As said before, then, ideals are made from actual things. They are not those things, however, as so much raw material; they are *made*; and the making is *in the recognition of things as conditions of what one is doing*. Life, then, gets as many ideals as it has recognized conditions; as it has things

found to be essential to it. So may pleasure, pain, dirt, food, law, conflict, mistakes, cleanliness, study, punishment, trees, chance, an automobile, a church, death, and anything else you please, provided only it be found to be a condition of some action of the finder or of his life in general, make true ideals. Any one of those things, subject to the proviso, has ideal value. Not one of them, moreover, can be the *summum bonum*. If I had to give some account of the *summum bonum*, interesting to the old-time moralists and peculiar property of a far idealism, I would simply speak of it, not as an ideal or the ideal, but as life among ideal things or as the world of things having ideal value. The *summum bonum* is thus a sort of home furnished with things and occupied by people that one has found essential to one's living, with which accordingly one feels a certain warm familiarity and which one naturally cherishes and cultivates. Sometimes, as must be admitted, the things and the people are cherished too much for their own sake, too much in the spirit of idolatry, but generally and primarily for their value as belonging to the life one is leading. So parents cherish their children. So a child cherishes its toys, even at night taking one or more of them to bed. So an artisan cherishes his tools. So—for it must come to this—in the true spirit of a near idealism, the only vital, as well as the only historic idealism, man cherishes and today as never before must cherish the external, natural world, manifestly the home of us all. Too long has it seemed only a real world. Now, thanks to the conquests of the past, thanks to the work of institutions, cultural and practical, thanks to art and literature, thanks to science from mechanics through biology to psychology, it may be seen as an ideal world, in its different parts and in its law and order warm with all the values of life.

What are ideals made of? Of anything incident to life. But the most commonplace things, from dish-washing or wood-sawing to love and personal devotion, will best show the real material of ideals; since the more commonplace a thing is, the more it is a condition of life. Who does not know that the old, old stories stir most deeply human interest in the life of ideals? For God, country, and home, men have explored and conquered the earth. For God, country, and home, as near idealists, men will continue to live

and die, still bent on what is ideal, on transfiguration of the commonplace. I do not say that commonplaceness is ideal, but this: the greatest ideals are made of the commonplace. Nothing will emphasize, moreover, the real nature of true idealism better than such an answer to the question as to what ideals are made of.

Now in much that I have been saying I am almost sure to be misunderstood. Trying to make idealism, even Christian idealism, still more vital, to deepen it, I shall probably appear to many to have done just the opposite thing. By my near or naturalistic idealism I shall, in spite of all I have said, seem to have destroyed the ideal altogether. But have I not made it clear that the effect of bringing idealism home and to earth, of supplanting the far idealism of the past with a near idealism, now that civilization has no frontier, is not to betray idealism, but to revive and perpetuate it, turning the ideal efforts of men into a new field? Changing the field of human endeavor, as I have concisely expressed the change, from distance to difference can hardly involve any loss in idealism. On the contrary, there must be gain, real advance. Not only does it make idealism timely and so vital, but also it sets life to still richer and more romantic adventures, to harder tasks, to greater strains on will and faith, than any that history has so far held for mankind. Is not real difference always harder to effect than distance? And, as it is harder, more mysterious? Another world may be only a sublimated edition of this and be mysterious only because afar off, but this world as different, which is the demand of today's near idealism, is, if I may so express myself, a much more serious matter, a harder and nobler adventure and a greater mystery. Christianity turning with full candor to naturalism will not lack occasion to use the faith that is in it.

Of mystery, however, of the quality of mystery attaching to the near idealism of today and especially of the practical values of mystery I shall speak in the next part.

III. SOME PRACTICAL VALUES OF MYSTERY

In the first part of this essay on the general subject of "Incarnation," the word made flesh, the ideal and spiritual expressed in and through the natural, I have called attention to the present-day

superstition of a morally or spiritually external natural world. Under now available evidence the natural world is no longer external to human life and in its relation to human life it is essentially just, intimate—as memory is intimate, and in a substantial way mediative and liberative of human activity. Wherefore, as a need of our time, I have suggested a more candid and confident union of the life of the spirit with the life of nature and, as one of the practical ways to such a union, the equation of conscience with the knowledge of natural laws. Then, in the second part under the caption: “What Ideals Are Made Of,” I have tried to show the meaning of this union to moral idealism, the conclusion being as follows. The world of distances of space and also of time having been at last measured and appraised, Christendom’s traditional idealism, a far, other-world idealism, must now give way to a near, this-world idealism. Even the traditional supernaturalism must give way to what, but only relatively to the passing idea of the supernatural, is naturalism. Such surrender, moreover, as has been pointed out, would really express only a continued loyalty to the original spirit of Christianity; for, if I may so express myself, we are today entering upon a deepened supernaturalism, an immanent, an inner or inward supernaturalism, that cannot but be at once more Christian and more vital than that of the past. But also, in further explanation of my meaning, I have said, that quality instead of quantity, here-and-now difference instead of distance, must be with fullest candor the new interest of men. Life no longer having any frontier, instead of going somewhere else in order to realize their ideals men have now themselves to become different and to make the world immediately around them different. Nor, let me say again, should I be understood for a moment as implying that never before have men been interested in quality; only that hitherto there has been a certain aloofness in this interest, a certain indirectness about it, and too much confusion of it with the interest in quantity; whereas now the call seems unequivocal for candor and directness.

And may I repeat or reword even more of what has been said? The whole history of Christendom certainly may be read as the history of the spiritual conquering the natural, physical world;

winning this world to itself; and so fulfilling that great vision, that great prophecy, expressed in the second head of the Trinity. At first, through the Middle Ages spiritual man held aloof from nature. Amid greatest dangers and frequent disasters he was then exploring and conquering the world and, as was suggested, there doubtless was good strategy in the aloofness. During this first period, too, and indeed so long as exploration and mere conquest were unfinished, as life continued to have a frontier, nothing was more natural than that man should think of the ideal life as a distant life, a life apart, the life of a far country or another world. What I have been calling a far or other-world idealism was his inspiration and gave its peculiar quality to all the adventures of his life. But now, the surface exploration and conquest being finished, the ever-receding frontier in time as well as in space having at last disappeared, man's idealism must change; from being a far, other-world, beyond-the-frontier idealism it must become a here-and-now, a near, a this-world idealism, urging man to difference in this life instead of to another life at a distance. True, intervening between the far idealism of exploration and conquest and this near idealism, which I have been urging, there have been the attitude and interest of an age of settlement and organization, to which I shall have occasion to refer later; for Christendom's long history, the spiritual winning its way in the natural, has been something like the very familiar enterprise of winning a home. First, man finds a place and takes possession; then follow settlement and economic organization; lastly, real life; and each period has its own attitude and interest, its own idealism. To the last, as man really begins to live, belongs a *near*, or *home*, idealism.

In its central idea, then, this essay would enjoin on Christendom today a home idealism; for Christendom seems to have reached its third period, the period of real life, creative life, at home. Until now, through the centuries of the first two periods human effort has been largely on the surface, moving about and exploring and settling the earth; so much on the surface, in fact, that some people, reading their history, are able to see only the movement and accumulation and no real progress; but progress there has been. Only, now, the surface things having been largely accomplished,

real life can begin. Human effort can at last apply itself as never before to the changes that, instead of being on the surface, really *strike in*; in short, to the changes of a near idealism, dependent not on distance but on difference.

Now, however, to come at last to the special topic of this third part, the change from a far to a near idealism, from progress by distance to progress by difference, must bring to life new adventure and, writing of the "practical values of mystery," I must consider even at some length this new adventure. Adventure and mystery are of course inseparable. To many a near idealism may seem like a fatal blow to them both. Similarly may any support of naturalism seem fatal to all religion. All things, however, are relative; especially "fatal blows." Adventures of travel and distance are indeed past, unless one may now think or dream of hazardous journeys to the moon and Mars and the sun and any of the "way-stations." The far-journeying discoverer and explorer and the intrepid pioneer, that so long have stirred the human imagination and given manner and spirit to human endeavor of all sorts, can no longer make their wonted appeal. Neither waiting on the duly coming future in the old-time way for whatever that mysterious future may bring nor boldly penetrating new regions of the earth is any longer the vital interest it was. Whatever remains of such life is only pleasant pastime, not serious living; a simulation of the old adventure, not the real thing; or, if serious, only utilitarian, not romantic. Yet, I must insist, life still holds plenty of real adventure. Mystery still confronts it. In a near idealism there is no real loss of romance. Distance may have been in the past a source of enchantment, but possible difference of life here and now lends an enchantment not easily exaggerated. Thus now life has for its romance adventures in difference; adventures of character and quality; of new life at home, not of new places.

But what may an adventure in difference, an adventure of character or quality, really be? Some, waiving all difficulties about distance but being troubled over quite another matter, will almost surely exclaim: Here is a great fall indeed! Here the old-time courage of men, whose achievements up and down the seas and over strange islands and continents have given so much to literature

and life, is degraded to what looks quite too much like weakness and sentimentality! Far better go back to the old ways even at their worst, to bloodshed and plunder, to that splendid superman, the savage, so gloriously naïve and noble as naïve in all his ways, than lose human vigor and courage in stay-at-home adventures in character and quality! Is it, then, so that I have been understood? Have I expressed myself so poorly as to deserve such misunderstanding? Perhaps my words, character and quality, as words in the language, are still weakly sentimental, however unfortunately. Perhaps the life itself, to which the words are now addressed, is still at pause, too bewildered with having its old adventures taken from it to turn with any full appreciation to the new that are now, as never before, possible to it and urgent upon it. If such be the case, then the recent seeming wholesale recall of the savage is not altogether strange and may even, as often with reactionary movements, be a hopeful sign, the very desperation of it insuring the quicker vision and feeling of the new life now so ready to be undertaken. Alas, that real vision must come with so much real agony! But, as for there being no chance for courage and manly vigor in these new adventures of character and quality, have you ever traveled "the Oregon Trail" with Parkman? Or followed Lewis and Clarke on their westward journey? Men journeyed with great adventures to the Pacific in those days. Today they speak with each other between New York and San Francisco; touch an electric button in Washington and set in motion vast machinery at the Panama Exposition; even, wherever they are, through pictures that reproduce figure, color, and motion with wonderful accuracy, see what is there and what transpires there or, for that matter, as a recognized possibility, what is and what transpires in any other part of the world. Surely the days of the Oregon Trail and of all it may symbolize here are past and their activities, adventures and all, can now properly belong only to pleasant pastimes or playful, however vigorous, sports. Surely, too, in the world of the new West and the new East and the new South and the new North, no one of which is any longer far or strange anywhere, there must be plenty of chance for adventure as well as an emphatic, urgent appeal to manly vigor. If only the

youth and the vigor of men would wake up to the call! Those words, character and quality, may be unfortunately chosen, under the circumstances, but I have found no better and, words aside, what I mean is the important thing. I am very far indeed from meaning anything namby-pamby or goody-goody or stay-at-home. In those new points of the compass, which instead of standing for the four quarters of a mysterious world are now only so many distinctly felt "local signs" in the consciousness and the activity of modern life, is there not such suggestion of new power as must make the blood course in men's veins? Is not even the home in which one may stay become a world-wide locus? When, as in this essay, speech is of a here-and-now idealism, it should be kept always in mind how big the here and the now in which men live have become, measured as they are by the whole round of the known world and the whole course of known history. At the present time for anyone with living interest and imagination to say: "I am now here" is—how feeble language is!—no small experience and no light responsibility. That new compass, in other words, must affect all the adverbs of place and time tremendously. But, again, as to courage and vigor, are men courageous and vigorous, does the blood course, only when they strain their senses and their might, personally or collectively, in direct physical combat with the elements or their fellows? May activities of mind, activities in the day's here and now, that are matters so much more of thought than of direct sensation, and the subtle, skilful control of the will have no place or only a subordinate place in the lives of real men? All so-called spiritual values aside, is a world-wide life, such as the new compass makes possible, not even more stirring physically than the life of the old days when vigorous adventure depended on surface movement and physical contact? The call of history, I think, is unequivocal. The change which henceforth challenges manly courage and makes vigorous adventure, not being determined by distance and the hardships of travel or campaign, can be only the change—to use the best phrase I can find—that, however much men may still move about on the surface, really *strikes in*. Change has been superficial and external or from outside long enough. Surface exploration and adventure and the

far idealism of them have done their great work. With full allowance of time to men to get used to having no frontier, to being—to all intents and purposes—not of course bodily, but in their interests and activities everywhere and even always, whenever and wherever they may be, in short with full allowance of time to them to get ready, as it were, to let change, so long on the surface, at last strike in, the day cannot now be far off when vigor and courage will respond fully and generally to the new call, the call of history, the call to vigorous adventure in the world of quality. With full measure of charity, too, or of admiration—which should it be?—for the latest way, outwardly so reactionary, of meeting today's call for vigor and courage, the real outcome cannot be doubted for a moment, if there be any truth in history. Inward change must win over outward; character over sheer force; creative life over conquest; difference over distance. If what I mean by inward change, by change striking in, be still in doubt, I may add that hereafter, when men really act, they must do so with the whole world, so to speak, acting with them or through them. Their consciousness well informed of the world—remember the compass of the four “local signs”—and their will guided by the meaning of it, they have no choice but the action that best expresses it and its wholeness. Expression, however, under such conditions, is what is intended by change striking in. Such expression explores depths, not distances.

Now what the outcome will be, or already is beginning to be, specifically in economic and political life, where recent interest has been so much in “values”; in art, where men have already revealed wonders beneath the surface of the sense qualities and the sense forms; or in science, which is getting dangerously near to something as penetrating as metaphysics, now that among other feats it has exploded as well as explored the atom, I may not undertake to say, interesting as such an inquiry would be; but, to turn to a simpler and a more general matter, the illusion that many still have about force, vigor, and the like and that makes them heed rather the call of the savage than the call of history, must always suggest the illusion often had about size. Not long ago a learned priest of Buddha in India was visited by two young men, an

American and a Japanese, both students of the oriental philosophies and religions, and after discussions of the special problems interesting to them all, they fell into less formal conversation. The priest's only journey by water had been on a small ferry-boat, a side-wheeler, across the Ganges and, learning of the long voyages of his two visitors, he exclaimed in great wonder: What enormous paddle-wheels your ferry-boats must have had! Enormous indeed! Even several miles in diameter, if you reason with that priest under the illusion of size; but, if you follow the facts and take their short cut to size, enormous only by indirection, the paddle-wheels having given place to something quite different, much smaller in size, much bigger in achievement. And so it has been and must be in the long run in the world of facts. As demands increase, size gives way to something different and, like size, force, and vigor, as manifested in some traditional mode, must give way to some distinctly new mode. Novelty, in a word, has ever been a short cut to greater power; the new thing, in fact, being only a product of change "striking in," instead of just depending on expansion. Nor can I help adding that the change, besides striking in, also somehow takes size and expansion in with it! Such humor, however, may only bewilder. But the illusion, under which men become reactionary, resorting to mere expansion of old ways, can never be without a certain pathos for its obviously real inefficiency. Also the radical novelty or difference of life, for which history now calls, must foreshadow an age of power even beyond all present imagination. There will be no lack of what makes the blood course in men's veins. The superman will have no need of deluding himself with savagery.

Have I succeeded at last in suggesting real adventure in the life of inward change; in the life whose increase of power is to come, not by increase of size, but by difference? Have I succeeded in showing that this life must make an even still stronger appeal to men of courage and good red blood than the life it must supplant, the life of the old frontier, the life of far dangers and opportunities, of extensive exploration, physical prowess and conquest? Then, so much done, I may turn directly to consideration of some of the practical values of mystery so indispensable to all adventure.

Real difference, I would recall, being harder to effect than distance, is not only more adventurous but also more mysterious; so that in their new life men will have need of the greatest courage and of every power and every faculty which their past has developed.

The practical values of mystery, which I shall consider, are three: Mystery is, so to speak, the background of real opportunity. Mystery imparts to life a saving humor. Mystery can refer to something real, it can leave the land of dreams for the land of reality, only if made an object of will. As the background of real opportunity mystery is well known to everybody. A young man accepts a position and is interested in it for the opportunity it opens to him. The opportunity, however, in his feeling embraces and must embrace, besides the position itself, to which too often he gives too little attention, a hidden future of promotions and of giddy heights of success that neither he nor anyone else can measure. And suppose, whether in little things or in big, man's life were without the unmeasured heights or depths; suppose the life he found himself in were just a position without any wonderful possibilities beyond it and its kind, is it likely that man would accept his employment with any interest whatever? I ask this question, because from what so far has been very commonplace I wish to pass to a very large idea that the question implies. The actual and the possible are elements in everyone's life, but not all appreciate real possibility. Not all appreciate how big with opportunity possibility, at least as it may be conceived nowadays, makes the world men live in. So many still treat possibility as if it meant only more or less. The illusion of size again! They seek to realize it by accumulation, repetition, routine, and their lives, accordingly, suggest the orderly mathematical series that has indeed no end to its possible terms but also that will never really rise, so to speak, above the position in which it was first employed. There is, in other words, such merely formal possibility, the possibility of keeping on indefinitely in the same old kind, worth its regular salary and even from time to time stated increases on account of age, but nothing more, and there is, besides, a real possibility, the possibility of something new and different, not to be measured by any price. Men are too prone—perhaps much in the training of an age, over

nineteen centuries long, of expansion and accumulation first of territory and then of economic wealth has made them too prone—to think of the old and the new, the past and the future, the actual and the possible, as commensurable, as capable of being judged or expressed under the same formal measure or manner; but they are not commensurable. Decidedly, unless the possibilities of life may be exhausted by accumulation and routine, they are incommensurable. Can any way of thinking or acting ever be an adequate measure of all that life holds? Then sooner or later, as certainly as that men live, really new things must follow the old things. Creation, in other words, is as true and essential to our present world as the possibilities of it are real, not formal. Life and evolution, as biology is coming to view them, are bigger with creation than the old orthodox creation which they have supplanted ever was. Once more a great dogma has proved to be rich in prophecy. But, in manner less philosophical, more secular, so large is the opportunity for which mystery provides a background, that it matters not what position in life one may hold; always not mere increase of the old returns, but promotion, the rise to something different, is possible, and whoever secures such promotion may rightfully feel a part in the creative life of the world. That the promoted fellow seldom if ever fails to assert his right to this feeling is matter of common observation! Although the world was never so small as it is now, its distances in space and time being overcome, it was never so big, so alive, with real possibility, with opportunities of creation and promotion. Let the narrow specialist, in life or thought, take notice. Let youth, the world over, take notice.

Of the world of real possibility or opportunity, which is also the world of adventure and mystery, at least two things more should be said. Thus with regard to any plan that anyone may make and try to carry out, it is always necessary that there may be failure; for, somehow on the possibility of failure depends both the value of mystery and the value of success. Recognizing this, then, I would simply add that in life's higher adventures into the possible, as in those that are lower, in adventures of character and quality, as in those of trail and campaign, the creatures who fall or fail should

not be treated as henceforth outside the pale, beyond pardon and hope; and this most emphatically, now that Christendom must face squarely the harder as well as higher adventures of near idealism. A people's heroic "wounded, missing, and dead" have too long been largely, if not only, those who have suffered the misfortunes of war and all like adventures on the world's trails. From a far idealism, which has fostered such adventures and exalted the heroes of them, the fallen in the adventures of character and quality, the immoral and the unsuccessful, the unpromoted, have so far had little human consideration, except as theology and law and social convention have made provision for them. Morally, legally, and socially they have been dealt with under principles of an abstract view, always as brutal as impractical, of righteousness and worth. But now, idealism being no longer far-sighted and beginning at home, the natural and the present being immediately alive with the ideal, human sympathy and romance for those who fall must rise to the new level. Losses there must always be in the struggles of life, whatever the nature of the adventure, and the new feeling, just now proposed, for the losses in the new adventure, is very surely one of the greatest opportunities of the mystery of life today. As to losses, death being the great loss and being sometimes physical, sometimes economic, sometimes moral, we have always heard much of the unity of life; little of the unity of death. Yet the latter is as real as the former. Physically, economically, morally, men live and die together; no man does either to himself alone. There can, then, be no putting the creatures who fall beyond the pale.

There remains, in discussion of the opportunity given to life by its mystery, some direct reference, however brief, to the never-failing challenge to greatness. As matter of course, in all its interests and relations human life has three notable expressions—the ordinary and commonplace, the professionally developed and expert, and the great. Most men are, so to speak, employed in the ordinary rank and file, although there are many who add to a life that in other respects is ordinary a professional skill in some one relation, and these, the ordinary men and the specially expert, experience their allotted drudgery and discipline, their adventures

and their possible promotions. Far be it from anyone to undervalue their life, even that of the wholly ordinary, if such there really be. Not only is the ordinary life near and dear to us all, being the material of all that is worth while, but also in particular through the appeal that special expertness is always making to general commonplaceness, it makes great life possible. So often the very ordinary man, catching the meaning of some special attainment or expertness, becomes the great man, revealing to all what he has found; and, in view of this, it is well to remember, as if in justification of it, that the two creatures among men who are born, not made, are the very ordinary man and the genius. For the rest, the challenge of greatness is ever present. It is felt sometime in his life and with some power by every man. So not to have mentioned it here had been almost like leaving Hamlet out of his own play. Above all, to every man must come the challenge of greatness in the new adventures in quality which would, as never before, achieve something, not through distance or size, but through difference. Atlas certainly has a very large world to bear on his shoulders today; large of course in the actual position which it offers any man, but large especially in the real and great opportunity, in the possible promotion.

Besides being the background of real opportunity, mystery was said, secondly, to impart to life a saving humor. Humor has many qualities and grades. It is the companion of many degrees of intelligence, appreciation, and self-control. But always the unexpected, a herald from the world of mystery, or the incongruous, only another name of the same herald, is what provokes it. Nor can I imagine how men would ever have a chance to laugh, were all things clear and also orderly and harmonious as clear. On the same condition, I suppose, they would never have a chance to grieve; for, say what one will, grief and laughter are children of the same uncertain life, of the mystery of life; they are two inseparable sisters. Perhaps no phrase better expresses what laughter, I mean laughter that has any spirit or character or vision in it, really is than the phrase, often heard: Laughter through tears. Indeed has anyone a right to laugh who might not cry or who has not been crying? The relation of the two, I suggest, is very much like that

of success and failure, no success being really worth while where there has been no failure or no real possibility of failure. So, while I would not too much sadden anyone's joy, I must insist—almost with a humorous persistence—on some tears behind all honest laughter. Moreover, it is a saving humor, not an idle one, that I am writing about.

Thus to associate laughter and humor with mystery and with the possibility of sorrow is to make it at least a possible attitude, and natural as possible, in religion. Surely many people have recognized and felt the joy of religion, but their actual joy—only one more mark of a far idealism—has not found expression in much natural laughter and all too often has been only a joy to come, their life here and now, at least when in religious mood and atmosphere, being even heavily gloomy and morose. Today, it is true, this gloom may be more manner and tradition than honest feeling; but, if such be the case, there is all the more reason for Protestantism or neo-Protestantism, in this field. Thus, as I have to believe, with the new candor toward nature, with the spiritual frankly intimate with the natural and idealism accordingly near instead of far, even open laughter will no longer be foreign to religion and the joy of religion will actually become a power, a saving humor, in natural, everyday life. That nice humor, for example, born of course of some mystery, of the rain falling, for good or for ill, on the just and on the unjust must be wholly lost on all whose ideal life is afar off and for whom the fortunes of storm or shower are determined by a power wholly outside; but it comes richly and deeply into the lives and the laughter of those who take the falling rains as only a normal part of the day's work and adventure. There is a humor of good sportsmanship that will suggest my meaning, I think, very well. Finally, as to the humor that saves, may I say that for me, as probably for many others, the "laughter of the gods" has always had a peculiar fascination. I know that it must suggest an offensive paganism to many. Still the paganism is not my meaning, but this. Were I a painter, undertaking to portray the face of God or of any of his saints, I should feel that I had failed signally if I should not get some natural laughter, laughter telling of vigorous life, of dangers and difficulties met, in

short laughter of the really "saving" quality, at least in the eyes. Without that I do not see how men can meet all the hardships and risks of today's near idealism.

The admission of natural laughter to religion because of religion being an attitude toward mystery and of mystery being today a matter of possible difference here and now instead of a matter of aloofness and distance brings this essay back to its starting-point and this part of it to the third of the three values of mystery. Religion, associated with superstition but very unlike it, was said to be one of the pioneer forces of life; to belong at the very battle-front, where discovery, invention, and creative achievement are the issue; to be even boldly and actively superior to the existing evidence of things; to be, in short, a courageous and confident plunge into the dark. Here, then, we see the third value of mystery. Mystery can refer to reality, it can leave the land of dreams for the land of reality, only if made an object of will. A more practical value than this, the challenge of the will, would be hard to imagine.

And this third value is, I think, pre-eminently a religious value. Some, I know, would say that religion's first appeal was to feeling, not will. Others, certain theologians as well as certain advocates of a "religion of science," would say intellect or reason. But, at least for the present day, the appeal of religion must be directly to the will, feeling with its art and reason with its science becoming only the will's acolytes. Moreover, when in the past feeling has appeared primary in religion, there has been in reality an appeal to the will, but to what I would call the far will, the will that assertively waits on the future or that seeks successes in distant unseen places, and, again, when religion has seemed to put reason first, the will challenged has been the will of skilful formulation and mechanical invention. If the former of these has discovered and explored the world, the latter has, so to speak, settled the world, organizing its life, institutionalizing and standardizing its methods, making the machinery through which the distance traversed by the explorers has ceased to be limitation, in a word effecting that change from the old compass of mysterious points or directions to the new compass of familiar "local signs." The former will, too, the far idealist's will, the explorer's will has been said to proceed from a self or soul

that, although in, was not really of the body and so was safely superior to the accidents of a very stormy physical world; and the latter, the practical, carefully measuring and skilfully organizing settler's will, say the will of Christendom since 1700, has finally become so skilfully mechanical as to suggest the automaton rather than anything else and to make mankind almost if not quite indifferent to the soul, as something apart from the body, that men once cherished so earnestly. But today, as if the great industrial automaton and the mysterious power of it were really to come to life, the challenge is, not to the will that explores and conquers nor yet to the will that settles, but to the will that at last lives and creates; to the will, as I should like to say, come at last fully to its own, feeling and reason being indeed only its attendants.

What may this creative will be? The creative will can belong only to a soul that has given up all spiritual abstraction and aloofness; that also, although comfortably established on earth, refuses to be put to sleep by an orderly routine or system; and that, entering fully and immediately into the world's life and there recalling the former aloofness and the idealism of it and putting to real use the order and routine, applies the very life and force of nature to making the world different. That the creative will in the world of the new compass can be no local will, selfishly personal, national, or racial, should go without saying. Also, not nature's life or force, since this is only childhood or savagery, but *willing* nature's life or force, this being maturity or civilization, is in general the secret of the creation; and today, nature's regions explored and her distances measured and appraised, to will her life must bring, in a measure never even dreamed of before, new life.

Now as for specific changes that willing nature's life would seem to call for, I may repeat, once more, that the human conscience must equate itself candidly and confidently with the knowledge of nature's laws. Certainly, were this done, the difference to life would be suggestive of nothing less than a miracle. No one can foresee what would be realized out of the real but mysterious possibilities. Pure foods, honest wares, direct and vital teaching and preaching, physiologically as well as socially, naturally as well as conventionally legitimate marriages, and in general direct responsi-

bility to the known facts of life would make such a difference as the human imagination cannot now compass. Among the now known facts of life are things specially connected with matters under discussion in recent paragraphs. Thus, as a fact, the frontier has passed and the days of productive exploration and conquest are no more. As a fact the economic settlement of the world, if not complete, is at least sufficient to warrant attention to the next great step. His house settled, man may begin to live. As a part of the responsibility to facts, then, the will of today should apply itself to removal of such things in life as retain the attitude and manners of life still having a frontier. Thus, if political divisions there must still be, they should be on racial, not on military, grounds, or, better still, only with the consent of the parties concerned. In general, militarism must be cast out as no longer efficient, as an anachronism, as belying, what the life of the peoples is already become, an international life. And sectional differences and privileges must be reduced, and in particular the very acute sectional difference between city and country. What is the great modern city but a product in much of its life of the frontier, a sort of counterpart of the frontier, a result of its back-action, an ingrowing or centripetal frontier, a frontier of the intensive expression of life? Which of the two frontiers, the city or the other, has exhibited the more lawlessness, the more violence to culture, the more irresponsibility in general, it would be very hard to say. Both bear the marks of a far idealism, always a near irresponsibility. But willing present facts calls for the disappearance of the frontier. And, as to what is becoming a tyranny of the economic settlement and industrial organization of the world, now that men would begin to live, the will of today should apply itself to a change in the recognized equal rights of men. Those old rights, life, liberty, and safe enjoyment of property, were only anti-militaristic. Even to begin to live in the world of today men must be granted more inclusive rights, rights that are even in some sense anti-industrialistic; such rights, I suggest, as useful occupation to take the place of the old right of mere life, an education that will develop skill to take the place of mere freedom of person, and enjoyment of the means of communication and transportation to take the place of the mere

safe enjoyment of property. Say, concisely, work, education, and commerce. Only with these more inclusive rights, I am sure, recognized and extended among men, can the industrial organization, under which the world has been settled, be finally put to productive or creative use. If industrialism, the great "ism" of the settlement of the earth, has already, in spite of much instability and some reaction, greatly transformed the life of men under the earlier militarism, the great "ism" of exploration and conquest, these changes may be counted on to produce a still greater transformation; great enough at least to stir men today to the adventure of them.

I set out to speak of the values of mystery. There were three, to which I wished to call attention. Mystery was the background of real opportunity. Mystery brought to life a saving humor. And mystery could make its object real only by making it an object of will. A world of untold opportunity, if nothing less than the opportunity of incarnation, realizing the spiritual in the natural, finding the ideal in the actual, stands before the will of the present day.